**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

**Listing of the Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A method for extending the radio coverage area of a communication system operating according to a predetermined radio protocol, the system comprising a primary master station having a radio coverage area, a first secondary slave station within the coverage area and a further secondary slave station which is located outside of the radio coverage area of the primary station, the method comprising a message exchange process in which: the first secondary slave station receives from the primary master station messages intended for the further secondary slave station; and transmits said messages to the further secondary slave station; and the first secondary slave station receives from the further secondary slave station messages intended for the primary master station; and transmits said messages to the primary master station.

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the message exchange process follows a registration process in which: the further secondary slave station transmits to the first secondary slave station a message comprising registration information, and the first secondary slave station transmits said registration information to the primary master station to register the further secondary slave station with the primary master station.

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein the registration information comprises a unique identifier identifying the further secondary slave station, and wherein: the primary master station registers the further secondary slave station by allocating a first identifier associated with the unique identifier of that station and transmits said first identifier to the first secondary slave station, and wherein the first secondary slave station allocates a second identifier associated with the first identifier and with the unique identifier and transmits the second identifier to the further secondary slave station, and wherein messages are subsequently exchanged according to the associated identifiers.

4. (currently amended) A method according to claim 3, wherein communication between the primary master station and the first secondary slave station is synchronised according to a first periodic beacon signal transmitted by said primary master station.

5. (currently amended) A method according to claim 4, wherein the first secondary slave station reserves a portion of the time period between the periodic beacon signals, and wherein the first secondary slave station transmits and receives messages to and from the further secondary slave station during this reserved time period.

6. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined radio protocol is that defined as the ZigBee radio standard.

7. (currently amended) A communication system operating according to a predetermined radio protocol and comprising a primary master station having a radio coverage area, a first secondary slave station within the coverage area and a further secondary slave station which is located outside of the radio coverage area of the primary master station, the first secondary slave station having means for receiving from the primary master station messages intended for the further secondary slave station, for transmitting said messages to the further secondary slave station, for receiving from the further secondary slave station messages intended for the primary master station and for transmitting said messages to the primary master station.

8. (currently amended) A communication system according to claim 7, wherein the first secondary slave station further comprises means for receiving a message comprising registration information from the further secondary slave station and means for transmitting said registration information to the primary master station to register the further secondary slave station with the primary master station.

9. (currently amended) A communication system according to claim 7, wherein the exchange of messages between the primary master station and the first secondary slave station is synchronised according to a periodic beacon signal transmitted by said primary master station.

10. (currently amended) A communication system according to claim 9, wherein the first secondary slave station reserves a portion of the time period between the periodic beacon signals, and wherein the first secondary slave station transmits to, and receives messages from the further secondary slave station during this reserved time period.

11. (previously presented) A communication system according to claim 7, wherein the predetermined radio protocol corresponds to the ZigBee radio standard.

12. (currently amended) A first secondary slave station for use in a communication system operating according to a predetermined radio protocol and having a primary master station having a radio coverage area, and a further secondary slave station which is located outside of the radio coverage area of the primary master station, the first secondary slave station being located within the radio coverage area of the primary master station and comprising means for receiving from the primary master station messages intended for the further secondary slave station, for transmitting said messages to the further secondary slave station, for receiving from the further secondary slave station messages intended for the primary master station and for transmitting said messages to the primary master station.

13. (currently amended) A first secondary slave station as claimed in claim 12 further comprising means for receiving a message comprising registration information from the further secondary slave station and means for transmitting said registration information to the primary master station to register the further secondary slave station with the primary master station.

14. (currently amended) A first secondary slave station as claimed in claim 12 wherein the predetermined radio protocol corresponds to the ZigBee radio standard.

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)